

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: January 27, 2015

Meeting No.: 199

Project: One Light Street

Phase: Schematic

Location: One Light Street bordered by East Baltimore Street (N), East Redwood Street (S) and Grant Street (E)

PRESENTATION:

Gerald Briggs, Director of Architecture at URS/AECOM presented the schematic design on behalf of the developer, Metropolitan Mirecourt Baltimore, LLC. The presentation was a new schematic design for the site which includes a mixed use project with office, first floor retail and multi-family housing units. At a proposed FAR of 22.2 the project includes a total of 657,139 SF which is further delineated as 281,580 SF office, 20,695 SF retail and 331,604 SF multi-family residential (340 units), as well as 646 parking spaces contained within an above ground parking structure. The requested increase from the 14 FAR allowable by zoning classification to 22.2FAR will require additional city approval.

As a building located on a very prominent corner in the heart of Baltimore's Harbor business district, there is a clear intention to design an iconic modern building for the site. The building's program strives to maintain the street edge while creating mid-block entrances for the office commercial fronting on Light Street and the multi-family entrance on East Redwood Street. One major challenge of the site is the 8 ft. grade difference from North to South, Redwood Street to East Baltimore Street and the 4ft. difference across the east/west plane of the building. The building articulation is predicated on a Core element that is wrapped with 2 tower elements resting on a unified common base. The 426 foot high structure rests on 7 floors of parking (2 underground) followed by 10 floors of office and 14 floors of residential topped with a penthouse floor finished with a sloping roof line. The 45' tower spans surrounding the Core are stepped down and provide a 19th floor courtyard. The building's strong cubic volume with its skin of high performance glass provides a gleaming façade and skyward marker above a robust granite base.

COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:

The Panel recognized the intention to achieve an iconic structure through a massing strategy of clean lines and the use of sophisticated materiality of performance glass, metal and polished stone. The urban design goals for the project reinforce the importance of this project in the revitalization of the city core. However, the Panel was concerned that the glass tower was not appropriately respectful of the surrounding building context. The adjacent Thomas building is dwarfed and effectively shunned by the new building. The spatial relationship across to 10 Light Street appears omitted as well as other key neighborhood elements, such as adjacency to a Metro entrance. The stone building base dwarfs the street and provides limited relief along East Baltimore Street. The residential aspects of the building are overshadowed by the monumental design intentions emanating from the commercial nature of the building. The key concerns can be summarized in several comments and recommendations set forth by panel members as follows:

- 1.) Elevations of surrounding buildings, in particular, 10 Light Street and the Thomas Building, and their relationship to the proposed building needs to be presented in the design development of this building to the panel.
- 2.) Greater attention needs to be paid to the relationship between building entrances and their alignment to building across from the proposed building site.
- 3.) The beltline of the building is problematic and requires attention as it doesn't effectively create the sense of lift off the base. The very heavy base treatment is unrelenting at the pedestrian scale. Bases are not abstract but should be part of the site.
- 4.) The sloped roof approach is desirable but likely requires stronger angle to read as a key design feature of the building.
- 5.) Traffic circulation and service entrances are challenges especially along Grant Street and East Baltimore Street. Reconsideration of the service access along East Baltimore is paramount and the team should investigate the opportunity to pull service trucks in to the east side of the side from the Grant St. curb cut as discussed.
- 6.) A detailed Landscape Plan at street level as well as a sustainable building strategy plan including such aspects as solar, green roofs and bio-retention needs to be presented to the panel.

Overall, the Panel found the building design promising at the schematic level but requires a significantly more detailed design presentation addressing the expressed concerns in the next meeting.

PANEL ACTION:

Recommend continue Schematic Development addressing the comments noted above.

Attending:

Gerald Briggs, V.P., Director of Architecture- URS/AECOM
Joe Clarke – Mirecourt Assoc.
Cary Euwer – Metropolitan
David Gilleze – DTZ
Nick Aello – HCM
Kirby Fowler, Nan Rohrer – DpoB
Alex Hutchinson, Ben Hobbs – BDC
Natalie Sherman – Baltimore Sun
Carol Gross, Mark Cramer – M+T Bank
Kevin Litten – BBJ
Al Barry – AB Associates

Dr. Meany*, Messr. Bowden, Burns - UDARP Panel

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Theo Ngongang, Carmen Morosan, Christina Gaymon – Planning Department